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sister's son. His importance is stressed in ritual and in the exchange of gifts.

A man whose maternal uncle is alive may not eat curry made of bitter oranges or green plantains. A proverb tells us that a diver for pearls must make certain that his maternal uncle is holding the rope above. Diving for pearls is a notoriously hazardous occupation and the life of the diver is in the hands of the man who is holding the rope above. It requires the greatest vigilance on the latter's part. It is significant that the maternal uncle should be chosen for this task. It is a tribute to the strength of bond between a man and his mother's brother.

The maternal uncle, paternal aunt, and the married sister are all required to bring gifts, provisions, and sheets of cloth called *kēṭāmé* at the marriage of a man. An informant told me that he remembered his mother carrying twenty head-loads of *kēṭāmé* gifts to her younger brother's wedding.

A party bringing *kēṭāmé* gifts is honoured with 'plantain honour' (*bāḷé birudu*): the leader of the party is asked to cut with his Coorg sword a row of three stout plantain stems fixed to the ground. A man who cuts through a stem at one stroke is a skilled swordsman: the blow must fall at an acute angle and must be delivered with firmness and strength.

The bringers of *kēṭāmé* gifts are given in return token gifts of cooked pork and sweet dishes. The host's band accompanies them a little distance when they leave.

Those relatives who brought *kēṭāmé* at wedding bring gifts of provisions and cloths called *aḍatalé* at death. They come accompanied by their band, and they are again given in return token gifts of cooked meat and sweet dishes.

Just before the corpse is buried or cremated certain important relatives perform a rite of segregation called *koḍa kukkuva*, the purpose of which is to break the bond between the dead person and his (or her) relatives. The relatives who have to take part in this rite are the dead person's spouse, eldest son, and 'cross-nephew' (i.e. a man's sister's son, or a woman's brother's son). The surviving spouse takes a mud pot, the son a tender coconut, and the 'cross-nephew' a bell-metal vessel with a spout at the side (*kiṇḍi*).

The three relatives march to a pond or well in the burial-ground after the bier has been deposited near the funeral pit or pyre. They have a dip in the pond, after which the family friend or his